

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EURE-00

CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 GAC-01 TRSE-00 MBFR-03 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10

ACDA-19 COA-02 EB-11 OMB-01 CG-00 COME-00 DOTE-00

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AMEMBASSY BONN

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E. O.11652: N/ A

TAGS: MARR IC

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION ISSUE: PRIME MINISTER' S

AP INTERVIEW

REF: REYKJAVIK 576

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER TOLD AP CORRESPONDENT THAT BRITISH INTERVENTION MAY IMPERIL FUTURE OF IDF AND THAT USG HAS BEEN NOTIFIED INFORMALLY THAT GOI DESIRES REVIEW OF DEFENSE AGREEMENT TO BEGIN IN NEXT FEW WEEKS.

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HE NOTED THAT RELAXATION OF EAST- WEST TENSIONS MAY MAKE NEED FOR IDF AND EVEN NATO MEMBERSHIP LESS VITAL. HE SAID HE MAY RAISE BOTH FISHING DISPUTE AND IDF ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT NIXON NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. AP CORRESPONDENT HAS INFORMED US THAT PRIME MINISTER JOHANNESSON TOLD HIM DURING INTERVIEW MAY 23 THAT BRITISH INTERVENTION IN FISHERIES DISPUTE MAY IMPERIL FUTURE OF ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE (IDF) AT KEFLAVIK. WHEN ASKED IF ICELAND'S DISPUTE WITH UK COULD BECOME TANGLED WITH IDF REVIEW JOHANNESSON REPLIED THAT IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT DISPUTE WILL AFFECT PUBLIC OPINION TO SOME EXTENT BUT WILL DEPEND ON WHAT NATO DECIDES TO DO. HE SAID UK WAS ONLY NATO COUNTRY TO HAVE SENT ITS NAVY INTO WATERS CLAIMED BY FELLOW MEMBER STATE. WHEN ASKED IF HE HIMSELF SAW LINKAGE BETWEEN ISSUES JOHANNESSON REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NO DIRECT CONNECTION BUT THAT ACTIONS AND BEHAVIOR OF NATO STATES MUST INFLUENCE PUBLIC OPINION IN RELATION TO IDF QUESTION. HE SAID " ICELANDERS WILL ASK, WHEN THE ROYAL NAVY IS IN THEIR FISHING LIMITS AND BREAKING ICELANDIC LAW, JUST WHAT PURPOSE THE DEFENSE BASE IS SERVING. DEFENSE IS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BASE."

3. JOHANNESSON SAID THAT USG HAD BEEN TOLD INFORMALLY THAT GOI DESIRES REVIEW OF IDF BASE ARRANGEMENTS TO BEGIN " IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS." HE SAID THAT IN PRESENT SITUATION PARLIAMENTARY BACKING FOR IDF REMOVAL FOLLOWING REVIEW PERIOD SEEMED UNLIKELY BUT THAT SITUATION COULD CHANGE. HE SAID GOI WOULD DECIDE ON REMOVAL QUESTION ONLY AFTER SEEING RESULTS OF REVIEW WHICH WILL BE CARRIED OUT ON TWO LEVELS WITHIN NATO AND BETWEEN ICELAND AND US. IF DECISION WERE MADE TO SEEK WITHDRAWAL OF IDF JOHANNESSON SAID " PERHAPS WE OURSELVES CAN TAKE OVER THE BASE MORE OR LESS. IT IS POSSIBLE. OR PERHAPS WE COULD SHARE IN ITS OPERATION."

4. JOHANNESSON EXCLUDED SUGGESTION (REPORTED REFTEL) THAT GOI MIGHT SEEK RENTAL PAYMENT OF IDF FACILITIES. HE SAID GOI WOULD NOT SEEK ARRANGEMENT SUCH AS MALTA HAS WITH BRITISH FOR MAINTENANCE OF NATO FACILITIES.

5. DURING INTERVIEW JOHANNESSON INDICATED THAT PRESSURES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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FOR ICELAND'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO WILL INTENSIFY. WHEN ASKED IF HE WOULD RESIST THESE PRESSURES HE REPLIED" THAT'S QUESTIONABLE. AND WOULD I MYSELF BE WILLING? CONDITIONS WILL CHANGE." HE SAID THAT EAST- WEST TENSIONS IN EUROPE ARE RELAXING. AS THINGS IMPROVE NEED FOR BASE IN ICELAND MAY BECOME LESS PRESSING. EVEN NECESSITY FOR NATO AS ALLIANCE MIGHT BE REDUCED.

6. AT ONE POINT PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE MIGHT TAKE UP BOTH FISHERIES DISPUTE AND IDF ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT NIXON WHEN HE COMES TO ICELAND NEXT WEEK FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT POMPIDOU.

7. THIS INTERVIEW HAS NOT YET BEEN PUBLISHED.

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*,KP*S**G****;S*8***L**B*.**GE*DN*U* *5XE**?*G***O*Z8 *****A0F,*JT**.#&*"*E*U"*U*H9*****N**D*G*?A*'"**Z*T*Q***9
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973REYKJA00577
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730560/abqcegui.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: REYKJAVIK 576
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Aug-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <12-Sep-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980304
Subject: IDF RETENTION ISSUE: PRIME MINISTER' S AP INTERVIEW
TAGS: MARR, IC
To: STATE
BONN
COPENHAGEN
LONDON
OSLO
STOCKHOLM
NATO BRUSSELS

CINCLANT
COMICEDEFOR
DOD
JCS ISA

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005